

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAMA KO 02544 220834Z

12

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAJ-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

AID-05 EB-07 /075 W

----- 100669

R 211730Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4301

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMA KO 2544

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ML, UR, MILI

SUBJ: SOVIET VICE-MINISTER OF DEFENSE SOKOLOV VISITS MALI

1. SOVIET VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL SRGEI SOKOLOV ARRIVED IN BAMA KO JULY 19 WITH HIS WIFE FOR A FIVE DAY OFFICIAL VISIT AT THE INVITATION OF LT. COL. KISSIMA DOUKARA, MALIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND SECURITY. SOKOLOV RECEIVED AIRPORT HONORS NORMALLY ACCORDED A HEAD OF STATE AND WAS DOUKARA'S GUEST AT A RECEPTION THE 19TH. SOKOLOV ALSO CALLED ON PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE.

2. SOKOLOV'S VISIT FOLLOWS ELEVEN MONTH PERIOD WHEN THERE WAS NO SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN BAMA KO (FORMER AMBASSADOR DIED IN AUTO ACCIDENT WHILE ON VACATION), NEW SOVIET AMBASSADOR FASILOVE ARRIVED JULY 14, SOVIET ECONOMIC AID HAS BEEN MINIMAL AND AT LEAST THREE MALIAN DELEGATIONS HAVE VISITED MOSCOW. IN MARCH 1976 LT COL. JOSEPH MARA, MEMBER OF THE RULING MILITARY COMMITTEE, VISITED MOSCOW, HE WAS FOLLOWED BY A CIVILIAN DELEGATION SOMETIME AFTER; AND PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE CALLED ON PODGORNYY ON THE WAY BACK FROM A STATE VISIT TO NORTH KOREA IN MAY.

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PAGE 02 BAMA KO 02544 220834Z

3. SOKOLOV WILL VISIT TIMBUKTU, SEGOU AND POSSIBLY MOPTI.

4. MALI'S NEVER ENDING OBJECTIVE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ANY COUNTRY IS TO INCREASE THE INFLOW OF FOREIGN AID. THE SOVIETS ARE ALREADY HEAVILY INVOLVED IN MALI WITH ABOUT 600 TECHNICIANS, DIPLOMATS AND MILITARY ADVISERS. THE MALIANS CANNOT REPAY, HOWEVER, EITHER PRINCIPLE OR INTEREST ON SOVIET LOANS AND WE ASSUME THE SOVIETS WILL SEEK A RETURN IN OTHER WAYS. THIS MAY BE THE PURPOSE OF SOKOLOV'S VISIT, BUT WE DO NOT YET HAVE DETAILS.

5. THE BASIC SITUATION IN MALI HAS NOT CHANGED: THE MILITARY COMMITTEE LACKS POPULAR SUPPORT AND IS UNABLE TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM OF A TRANSITION TO LONG-PROMISED CIVILIAN RULE; CORRUPTION IS INCREASING, ESPECIALLY AT HIGH LEVELS; THE ECONOMY HAS NOT YET RECOVERED FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT, BAD MANAGEMENT HAS REDUCED THE STATE ENTERPRISES TO CONFUSION AND STAGGERING LOSSES. A COUP PLOT UNCOVERED IN APRIL NEVER SERIOUSLY THREATENED THE REGIME, BUT IT CAME FROM WITHIN THE ARMY, THE MOST LIKELY SOURCE OF OPPOSITION.

6. CONCLUSION: THE MALIANS NEED SOVIET ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND THE SOVIETS APPEAR WILLING TO PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN INCREASES. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE NOW ON WHAT THEY WILL DEMAND FROM THE MALIANS, BUT A GREATER SENSITIVITY TO SOVIET INTERESTS IS AN OBVIOUS POSSIBILITY.  
MCGUIRE

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